

~~SENSITIVE~~

CIA/SAVA /WVIND 7/12/8



WEEKLY VIETNAM INDICATORS

Week Ending 18 December 1971

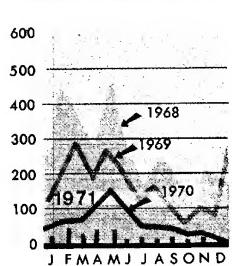
NSA Declassification/Release Instructions on File.

For the President Only

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SOUTH VIETNAM WEEKLY INDICATORS

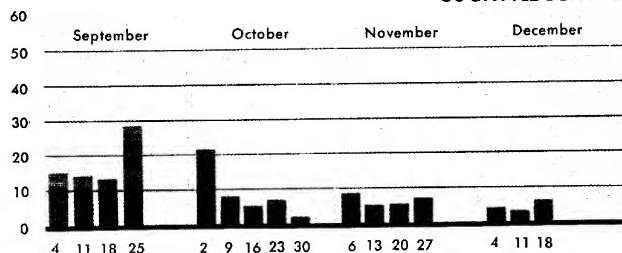
1968-1971
Weekly average for each month



SEPTEMBER 1971 - DECEMBER 1971
Weekly data as reported

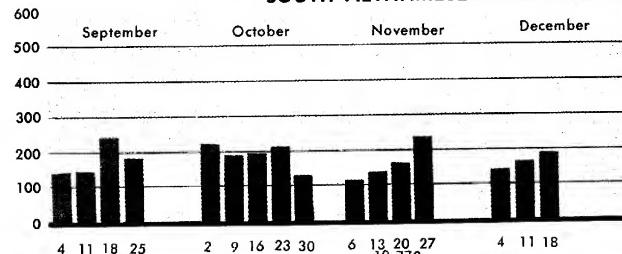
US BATTLE DEATHS

rose to six from the two of last week.



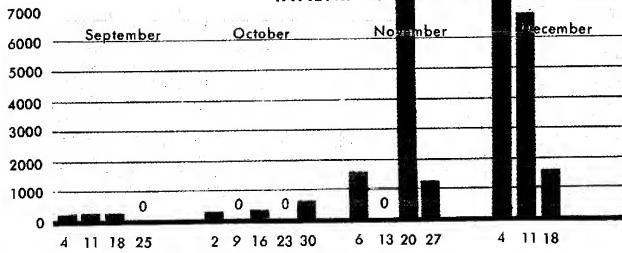
SOUTH VIETNAMESE BATTLE DEATHS

increased to 194 from last week's 171. The official total will change as late reports are received and will be lower than the figures released to the press by the GVN.



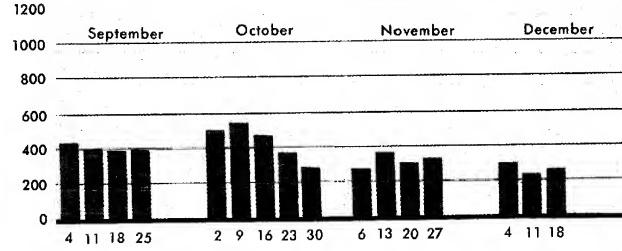
INFILTRATORS DETECTED IN PIPELINE

stand at three regular and 11 small, special purpose groups totaling some 1,593. The number of infiltrators noted moving toward South Vietnam-Cambodia since 1 October 1971 is now an estimated 29,000-31,000.



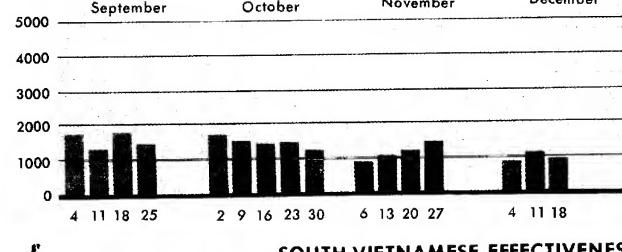
ENEMY-INITIATED INCIDENTS

climbed to 253 from the 226 of last week.



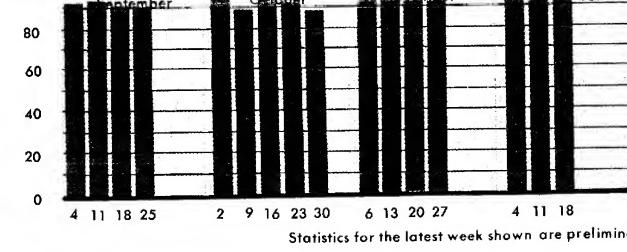
ENEMY KILLED IN ACTION

declined from last week's 1,046 to 998.



SOUTH VIETNAMESE EFFECTIVENESS

as measured by the percentage of enemy killed by GVN forces dropped to 93% from the previous week's 95%.



Statistics for the latest week shown are preliminary

FOR THE PRESIDENT ONLY

Enemy Activity

The anticipated North Vietnamese dry season offensive in north Laos got underway on the night of 17-18 December with a large and well-coordinated drive which swept friendly troops from their positions on the Plain of Jars (PDJ) and overran the old neutralist capital of Muong Soui, northwest of the Plain. (Last year, Muong Soui did not fall until 2 February.) If the Communists can sustain their present momentum, they will be threatening Long Tieng itself by early January, if not before. The fluidity of the situation and intensity of current combat makes it hard to ascertain from this distance precisely how things stand at any given moment. Meo forces are retreating in some disarray; the Thai gave a good -- and in some instances magnificent -- account of themselves and seem to have withdrawn in good, disciplined order. Efforts are now being made to check the enemy advance along the southwestern edge of the Plain and establish a viable defense line anchored on Ban Na. How successful these efforts will be hinges on many factors, including the level of available air support and the Mission's ability to replace the friendly artillery tubes lost when forward fire support bases were overrun.

Elsewhere in Laos, the situation around Luang Prabang has remained static. In south Laos, the large government operation northeast of the Bolovens Plateau, THAO LA, was successfully terminated on 16 December. Farther south, four government battalions were dispersed by an enemy multi-battalion ambush near Paksong and are regrouping. Also, enemy pressure on Thateng has increased. The enemy drive in Military Region (MR) II is almost certain to be followed by offensives in the Bolovens and in south Laos.

Enemy-initiated activity in Cambodia has been generally confined to the Route 6 area in the vicinity of Prakham and Tang Kouk (the former operational area of CHENLA II). While the Communists appear capable of overrunning FANK positions at any time they choose to do so, for the moment, they seem content to confine themselves to harassment through attacks by fire and limited ground actions. Operation TOAN THANG 01/71, the South Vietnamese effort to relieve pressure on Route 6, has still not encountered any serious opposition. Almost all friendly forces have withdrawn from the Chup Plantation. This pull back is apparently in reaction to elements of the Viet Cong 9th Division, which recently slipped back across the Mekong and pose a potential threat to exposed South Vietnamese units. Even though there seems to be no indication of major activity in the Chup area for the moment, the enemy apparently still retains the capability for a sudden strike against ARVN forces probing the Plantation area. To date, TOAN THANG does not seem to have drawn off significant numbers of Communist troops from Route 6, and it has not made any apparent inroads into the enemy bases, in the Chup area.

In South Vietnam, enemy-initiated activity has increased somewhat in eastern Quang Tri Province in the vicinity of the DMZ, but no major tactical activity has occurred. In other sections of the country, enemy activity remained at generally low levels. The sum of the past week's activity is probably linked to the celebration of Communist anniversaries which are traditionally marked in this manner. We expect to see a continuation of similar harassing actions by the Communists through, perhaps, 25 December (a period of low lunar illumination), but no significant increase seems indicated in the immediate future.

Enemy Infiltration

During the past week, three regular and 11 small, special purpose groups totaling 1,593 men were detected in the Lao Panhandle. Additionally, a number of personnel infiltration packets which had been accepted earlier as "gap-fill" groups were detected with their strengths. The adjusted estimated number of infiltrators moving toward South Vietnam-Cambodia since 1 October 1971 now stands at some 29,000-31,000. While personnel infiltration continues to proceed briskly, the Communists' logistics activities continue to follow the enigmatic pattern of the past six weeks. Logistics support for enemy units in northern Laos remained well above that of last year in preparation for the offensive on the PDJ. In the south, however, supplies are still moving into southbound logistics corridors at a very low level, roughly half the total noted last year at this time. The Communists may well have slowed

their southward logistics pace to avoid accumulation of supplies which would invite Allied cross-border operations. Enemy units were alerted on 10 December that South Vietnamese forces were preparing to launch a large-scale operation in the Lao Panhandle west of Quang Tri.

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